MADRAS.

THE

Student's Own Magazine

For India, Burma, and Ceylon.

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DISCIPLINE.

WE hope that all our young readers will take the trouble to read the following remarks on a word that is so often on the lips of their teachers and, when rightly understood, is of great importance to each individual and to each nation. We do not think that the word, and all that the word implies, is by any means well understood, either in schools or homes. The word primarily means 'the treatment suited to a disciple or learner', then, training both physical and moral, the getting rid of bad habits and the substitution of good ones. The word, in many schools, has the restricted meaning of 'correction and chastisement.' Horace, the great Latin Poet, speaking of teaching or *learning* says "*Doctrina vim promovet insitam*", *i.e.*, "Learning, teaching or training improves the natural powers." Discipline goes even one step further; its object is not only to improve the good powers implanted in us by

nature, but to eradicate any bad habits. Now where should discipline begin? The plain answer is—*at home.* In this country, where 999 schools out of every 1,000 are day schools, the greater part of every 24 hours must be spent in the home. In the matter of 'discipline' the generality of Hindu homes are far from being satisfactory 'schools'. Children are too much petted and allowed to have their own way. This allowing children to have their own way is at the root of all evil. From their earliest days children should be taught to obey their parents' lightest words. Instant, prompt obedience is the keynote to good discipline. The British Navy is known throughout the world for its extraordinarily perfect discipline,—every boy and man in it is trained to obey instantly and on the run. There is never any argument. 'Do this' and it has to be done almost instantaneously. The result is extraordinary smartness.

Now a very similar state of things should exist in all schools and classes. Boys should take a pride in doing their utmost to obey the orders and even the wishes of their superiors. It is a sure sign of bad teaching on the part of the master when a class is found in a state of confusion and indiscipline. A well-taught class is, as a rule, a well-disciplined class. A good disciplinarian is not a man or a woman teacher who controls his or her class by severity and punishment, but who, by good teaching and moral suasion, has the class always under control and always cheerfully obedient.

The celebrated Mrs. Annie Besant, of whom you have all heard, and whom, perhaps, many of you have seen, has a true conception of discipline. Not long ago she spoke forcibly against school boys mixing themselves up with political questions. After speaking in praise of India and of Hinduism in its purer forms, she goes on :—

"Some of you may say : 'But if you think like this of India, why did you the other day shut out from this College a number of Bengali boys, who by their mourning costume showed their disapproval of the partition of Bengal?' To this I say : I certainly

love India with the strongest love, and teach the boys to love her, but within the walls of this Institution we know no party politics and here we will not admit them. We know of one India, and we take in all that affects the whole of India, such as the accession of a new Sovereign—in that we may take part. But our boys come here for education and not for political controversy. When I asked some of the boys: 'Why do you come in that costume?' they said 'We want to protest against the Government.' But it is not the business of boys to protest against the Government; that is for men, said I. If we are to bring into educational establishments party politics, how much education can be given? 'It is the order of our superiors and therefore we do so,' said a boy. My answer was: Within the walls of this College I recognize no superiors except the governing body and teachers. Outside the College you obey your fathers; inside the College the rules of the place."

"If we are to allow every different part of India to send orders to our boys to take part in political demonstrations, then one day we may get an order from Calcutta, another day from Madras, Bombay or Lahore, bidding our students protest against, or demonstrate for, some party measure. All discipline would vanish, and our institution would become a whirlpool of undigested politics instead of a sober educational training ground for India's sons. We surround them with an atmosphere of love of country, of duty to their motherland; we encourage discussion and debates; we foster initiative and self-dependence; but we avoid all political party disputes, as in religion we avoid all sectarian controversies. If we did otherwise, we should get animosity and party feeling instead of harmony and steadiness of growth. Just because we love India truly, we dare to oppose our brothers when they want us do that which is unwise. I say definitely and clearly that the duty of boys is to learn, and not to make political protests. It is not their business to protest; that is the business of men. Men rightly take part in the politics of their country. The boys have to learn; they must be educated; they must be disciplined.

Studentship is the time of obedience. It is against the Hindu Shastras that a student should interfere in the affairs of his country. Moreover it is not right that the boy's warm heart should be used by elder people to foment public discontent, and to harass Governments."

Note those words and let them strike into your hearts and minds:—

BOYS HAVE TO LEARN:
THEY MUST BE EDUCATED:
THEY MUST BE DISCIPLINED:
STUDENTSHIP IS THE TIME OF OBEDIENCE.

Be Thorough ; or, "All that Glitters is not Gold."

THERE is a Hindoo fable with which many of our readers are probably familiar, and can well be rendered in English in the few words at the head of this article.

Ravens as you know can be taught to talk: though sometimes it is a long time before they utter words distinctly. A young raven was once, after considerable patience and effort on his master's part, made to say "Of course I am." And as soon as the bird was perfect, the man, who was poor, offered the bird for sale.

When asked the price of the bird, the owner demanded an enormous sum, which seemed a ridiculous price to the would-be purchasers. One said to another: "Can this bird be worth so much?" and was astounded when the raven called out "Of course I am."

Every one thought the bird must be very clever, so the price was paid, and the raven changed owners.

The man who had bought the bird took it home to his wife; but, not telling her what he had for her, he merely said "I have brought you a bird." She asked if it was a pretty one, and to their great delight the raven called out "Of course I am."

But as days went on, it was quickly discovered that these words were all the bird could say, and the man remarked to his wife: "I am afraid I have been taken in, the raven is a fraud." Whereupon the croaking voice answered "Of course I am." And the bird's master could but laugh, while he said "Well this must teach me in future not to make hasty bargains, but to think well about everything, and not be taken in by apparent cleverness."

Now my readers, this little fable of the Hindoos leads up to a subject about which we had a short selected article in our last issue: "Thoroughness." In all we have to do, we must bear in mind that nothing pays better, in the long run, than doing well what we have to do. There must be no pretence, no mere surface work, by which we may *appear* clever, but which will never help us in our career. If the lessons learnt, the lectures attended, or the books read, are really to teach something, they must be made the object on which we fix all our attention for the time being. Holidays are over, and work must be begun in earnest by those who wish to pass in their examinations at the end of the year. The raven in the fable learnt his one speech by having it repeated to him over and over again: but we saw how impossible it was for him to *apply* it rightly. If students use cram books, and learn them by heart, they will probably scrape through their examinations, but if they have not listened attentively to the lectures given on these subjects: if they have not, by reading and discussing, widened their knowledge, all that they have learnt will be of little use to them when they have to put in practice the knowledge which they are now acquiring. Books with notes attached are necessary, especially for those who are studying a language which is not their own vernacular. If they are good annotations, these books not only

explain the subject, but suggest the means of gaining a greater insight into that particular study. Thoroughness always pays in the end, and if only the young would remember this, there would, we think, be fewer "failures." Most difficulties can be overcome, and the greatest success may be achieved in those very things which now seem to be quite impossible. The name of one of the greatest scientists of the last century occurs to me as an illustration of thoroughness in work—Michael Farraday. He was a poor boy, and, when young, sold newspapers in the London streets. He did not like it, but it was his work, and he did it *as well as he could*. There was no shirking, although he very often wished he could be at school as were other boys of his age. Whenever he had any spare time he read, and went to lectures, for he was much interested in all that was scientific. Little by little he gained the knowledge he coveted, and one day with a beating heart, he sent some of his notes and plans which he had sketched out to one of the great men of the day, Sir Humphry Davy,—with the packet he also sent a note, telling the great man how earnestly he hoped some day to give his life to science.

The work sent by Michael Farraday for inspection was so thorough, and so well done, that he gained his first step, and was appointed to assist Sir Humphry Davy in his work at the Royal Institution. Many years had to pass, many laborious years, before he became the great scientist we know him to have been, but, throughout his whole career, any success he achieved was due to the thoroughness of his work. He died in 1867, honoured by his Queen, and leaving to the scientific world the secrets he had discovered in science, and to the world at large the lesson all can follow, that it always pays well to do well what has to be done.

M. K. B.

No. IX.

PETER THE GREAT.

Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

AS one writer on Peter the Great has justly said "the man from beginning to end was an enigma." It is difficult very often to see why he was called 'Great', for with that title, we associate deeds which raise a man not only physically, but mentally and morally, above his fellow creatures. There are many incidents in the life of this Emperor, which make us feel that he fell far short of the usual ideal of a great man, nay, that he even sank to the

level of the brutes. But we must remember the country to which he belonged, the race from which he sprang, and we can see how the good and evil were striving in his nature and then judge accordingly.

The Emperor known as Peter the Great was born in Moscow in 1672. His mother Natalia Narishina was the second wife of the Czar Alexis. By his first wife he had several children, those with whom history is concerned being Feodore, Ivan, and a daughter Sophia.

Feodore succeeded his father Alexis, but he was always delicate, and not too strong mentally, and soon died without issue. During his reign Russia, which needed a strong hand over it, was greatly disturbed, and on the death of Feodore, the country was divided into many factions. Ivan, who was really the next heir to the throne, was actually weak in intellect, and unfit to rule. The more sensible party wished to place Peter on the throne, as the one most fitted to hold the reins of Government, but were balked in their designs by Sophia, a woman of most remarkable power and capacity. She is variously described by writers as "coarse in appearance," "a handsome young lady," etc., but however that may be, she was undoubtedly very clever, and it is much to be regretted that she did not work well with her half-brother Peter. Had she been imbued with his desire for improving the condition of the country, then indeed Russia would have grown in greatness, but we fear that Sophia's one idea was self-aggrandisement. Considering the secluded life that the Russian women were compelled to lead, and their sad want of education, this was the more remarkable, and we cannot but feel that Peter was right in the step he eventually took of putting her in seclusion in a convent. Finally, Ivan and Peter were declared joint sovereigns, with Sophia as regent which position she held for seven years.

In 1689 Peter married his first wife Eudoxia. He had two children, the younger dying a baby, and the elder Alexis, of

whose miserable fate we shall have more to say. The marriage was not a happy one, and eventually Peter divorced her, and married a peasant woman named Catherine, to whom he seems to have been very devoted.

Ivan the joint Emperor died in 1696, and then Peter who, we must remember, could only have been 17 years of age, became sole Emperor of the Russias.

He turned his attention at once to the improvement of his country, and strove by every means to increase his own knowledge, and to add to the meagre instruction he had received. Education was at a very low ebb in Russia, and few of the nobles could either read or write correctly. Peter was determined to make his country more of a maritime power, and after the taking of Azov from the Turks which opened the sea board to the Russians, the Emperor decided to travel in Europe and gain a practical knowledge himself of ship-building, and naval matters. He worked in the dockyard at Saardam in Holland as a labourer, and then went to England, where he worked and learned much at the great ship-building yards of Deptford.

On his journey back to Russia news was brought him of further revolts of the opposite party, and hurrying on, Peter, we are sorry to say, punished the rebels so cruelly that his name will be for ever stained by the records of these deeds. He made so many fatal mistakes in his dealings with his people that it is often very difficult to realise and understand the great reforms he really effected in the country.

He determined to emancipate the Russian women from their life of degradation and seclusion, and in this he succeeded. He did away with many cruel and revolting laws, and generally improved the condition of his people.

During his last tour in Europe, Alexis, Peter's son by his first wife, rose in rebellion, and the Emperor's indignation on

his return was so great that he punished his son most cruelly, and some say he caused him to be beaten to death. This again is a terrible stain on Peter's name, and is one of the cruel acts of his reign, which makes it difficult for us to allow that he deserved the name of Great. But undoubtedly through his agency Russia was made a powerful empire, and from his reign we date the libraries and museums, the growth of painting and sculpture, as well as wiser laws, and the growth of the Russian navy and army.

He died in 1725, when only 53 years of age, but completely worn out by his strenuous life, and probably the violence of his nature. To the unreasoning paroxysms of rage from which he suffered we attribute many of his faults and can realise how truly great he might have been in every way had he been trained as a little child among gentle, educated women, whose influence would probably have early checked the mad rage which so often overtook him. Every thing depends on a man's early life and training—the impressions of childhood are never lost, however long we live.

A Failure.

Into Lawyer Dawson's office went a tall thin man one day—
He went there to seek to borrow, for he had some debts to pay :
Yes,—his creditors, who vainly many times their dues had sought,
Threatened now to try to get it through the local country court.

This induced him to determine to seek out his father's friend,
Lawyer Dawson, and to ask him if the money he would lend :
Though he had not seen the lawyer for a dozen years or more,
He felt certain of a hearing for the tale he had in store.

"You remember me, I think, Sir," he began, "I am the son
Of your late friend, Doctor Grayson—I'm the unsuccessful one."
Then he told his tale and added, "Sir, it was my wish to go
In the way my father taught me, but I've failed as now you know."

Lawyer Dawson was a keen man, he was very candid too;
And he said "you wished and hoped, Sir, but you did not try *to do*;
Not by wishes or intentions, or by hopes can work be done:
No indeed: by making *efforts* what we wish for must be won.

I am *not* surprised to see you in this plight, for well I knew,
That unless you greatly altered, only failure was your due:
I remember that in boyhood, you were found, to our regret,
Very loth to make an effort for a thing you wished to get."

Then he added, very kindly "For your good old father's sake
I will settle with your debtors, if a promise you will make,
That the work which I will offer, and which *can* be done by you,
You will undertake, and thus, Sir, use a chance to start anew."

Whilst the lawyer spoke, Hugh Grayson stood with head bowed low in shame,
He had been an idle wisher, he deserved the words of blame:
And so deep was the impression which they made upon his heart
That he gladly gave a promise to take up a *worker's* part.

Take a hint, my lads, I beg you—do not use an idler's plan :
Wishing, hoping, and intending *cannot* make a prosperous man.
You must work for what you wish for, you must work with all your might,
And success will surely meet you, if you wish and work aright.—*Selected.*

The Wolf.

THE wolf is a wild animal, one of the mammals, and is common in nearly all the countries of the world. There are four varieties, Wolves, Dogs, Jackals and Foxes, but the wolf proper is the largest of the species, if we except some of the domestic dogs, such as the St. Bernard, the Mastiff and others. The Japanese wolf is perhaps the smallest of the kind, with shorter legs and a smaller body than the wolves of other countries.

These animals are found in nearly every corner of Europe, and in North America, but not in South America or Africa. The whole Indian Peninsula can boast of wolves excepting Ceylon, Burmah and Siam, and of course, they abound in Northern Asia, and in Siberia, just as they do in the North of Europe. In North America there is a kind of wolf called the Coyote or Prairie wolf, which is much feared as a very destructive animal.

The colour varies in different countries, being of a yellowish grey or black, and in some countries almost white. They are much larger in the Northern regions and the fur much thicker.

They are cowardly animals, for they never attack unless in numbers, but they are deadly enemies to farmers in all countries, being particularly fond of sheep.

We can hardly think of the pretty arctic fox as a wolf, and yet he belongs to the same family as do our own domestic dogs, which are so docile and obedient.

Wolves when captured young can be tamed, and will be very faithful to their owners, but can never be trusted with strangers, and the bite of a wolf is more deadly than that of a dog.

At one time wolves were very common in England, in fact became so dangerous in very early times that King Edgar offered a high price for the head of each animal. They were found in England, however, as late as the reign of Henry VII, and we imagine they were then exterminated as no mention is made of them again.

In Scotland, the country is wilder than in England, and there are wide tracts of uncultivated land ; so it is not to be wondered at, that when driven from England the wolves took refuge there and it was very long before they were exterminated. As late as 1743, we find mention made of them in Scotland.

France is very much infested by these animals, and it can only be on account of its insular position that England has managed to keep itself free from these destructive creatures.

Other countries are not so fortunate, and we hear from travellers ghastly stories of their pursuit by wolves. They are strong in their attacks because they always hunt in packs. A single wolf can easily be cowed, for when alone he will slink away like a beaten dog. But they are cunning, and in our childhood we must all have read and enjoyed the story of the wolf in Red Riding Hood.

Very thrilling are the stories which come to us from Russia and Poland In these countries where the cold is very great, these animals become very savage in the winter time and come in packs into the villages, seizing cattle, dogs, and even people, and devouring them.

In Poland there are great woods or forests of thick dark trees, very frequently of oak and pine. In the winter which is very severe there, the ground is covered with frozen snow for many months and, as carriages cannot be used, travellers go about in sledges, or carriages without wheels. In many places wolf hunts in sledges are organized, and sometimes even ladies join in them.

A very exciting story is told of one of these hunts when two girls insisted on going in the sledge with their brothers and their friends. Guns and knives in abundance were taken, and when the forest was entered, a roasted pig, which has a very savoury smell, was tied to the back of the carriage and dragged above the ground.

The party went on for some time through the forest, when suddenly, a huge wolf appeared. The younger men would have killed him at once, but the old huntsman in charge told them to stop, for one wolf never came alone, and there must be many near. He was right, for, a murmuring sound in the distance grew louder and nearer, and then they were soon surrounded by more wolves than one could have believed to exist in the country. Many guns were fired, and some wolves killed, but the others held their ground snarling and howling As a rule a pack of wolves retreats, any way for a time, when some of their numbers are killed, but these evidently were too savage from hunger to do this.

The poor horses galloped on nearly dead with fright, and some of the wolves leaped at their heads, making them almost unmanageable.

At last a light in a cottage was seen, and by firing a volley among the wolves they were made to recoil for a moment. During that time a rush into the cottage was made, and every available thing was used to barricade the door, for the wild beasts hurled themselves in fury against it, and scraped up the earth all round, endangering the foundation of the cottage. Blazing logs were flung among them, for every minute it was feared that the door and walls would give way. The poor horses were left outside, and it must have been terrible to hear them, for the scream of a horse in pain is a sound that one can never forget. At length the night wore away, and as soon as daylight began to appear the wolves scurried away in all directions, balked of their prey and only eager to hide themselves until darkness should again fall over the earth.

How thankful the hunters must have been to think that the terrible night was over.

How to become Wise

A Fable.

A king once asked a sage, what books he had studied in order to become wise. "Sire", replied the sage, "no books at all; wisdom cannot be learnt in that way. I have always made it a practice to *think* well on every subject I undertake, and then I do each in the best possible way. That is how I have been able to acquire what little wisdom I possess." "You are quite right," exclaimed the king, highly pleased with the answer, "a man may have studied all the books in the world, and yet be a fool after all. Wisdom is more precious than rubies, and can only be acquired by practising wise and good deeds."

Moral: Books are of no value, unless we profit by and act according to what they teach.—*Selected.*

About Stamps.

Most young people, and some old ones as well, collect stamps as a hobby. It is an interesting pursuit, and really teaches a great deal of both history and geography. A postage stamp is merely a receipt given for money paid for a letter or a parcel. Has that idea occurred to our readers and have they ever wondered as to the origin of stamps? We believe that they were first used in Paris in the 17th century, and that the stamps were paid for in a curious way. Letters were put into boxes, and these were emptied three times a day, and the letters taken to the addressees as written on them, only one half penny being charged. The money was prepaid by tickets which were bought, and fixed on the letters. It does not sound a very safe way of sending letters, and every one was very glad when postage stamps, in 1840, were first generally used.

People now-a-days spend large sums of money on stamp collecting, which as works of art are most interesting. The first stamps in circulation were many of them very beautiful, being either embossed or engraved, and quite artistic. There is one which belongs to Nova Scotia, which is most beautiful and precious on account of its engraving. All should add this to their collection, as well as the old six-penny, ten-penny, and shilling English stamps, which are valuable on account of the embossing. If the stamps of the present day are examined, it will be found that they are nearly all merely surface-printed. Everyone is in a hurry now-a-days, and common every day things are not as artistic as they used to be.—Boys and girls should have a hobby, and stamp-collecting is instructive and amusing. Many collections of stamps have been sold for very large sums.—An *ordinary* school-boy album of stamps belonging to a friend of ours was sold not long ago by him for £ 7.

The Pterodactyl.

The huge flying lizard called the Pterodactyl was a nocturnal creature, and the description of it is enough to make one shudder. Skeletons of the largest of the species have been found in England, but traces of them are found in all parts of Europe and in North America. Its shape resembled that of a bat, with a head like a crocodile, and very long sharp teeth in the front of the mouth. As it was a nocturnal creature the eyes were large and prominent. On the wings were things like hooked claws, which were doubtless used by the creature to hang itself on to trees to rest like some of the bats now in existence. The tail, which it must have used as birds do, to steer itself through the air by, was of varied length and was apparently a bone, with the skin stretched over it, looking rather like a leaf in shape. Its neck was long and thin, like that of a goose or swan, and its feet with its long sharp claws were evidently so made that the creature could live in the trees or on the ground. But unlike the lizards we know of, it must have hopped and not crawled.

In the East Indies there is a kind of flying lizard, most beautifully coloured in all shades of blue. It is rarely more than 10 inches in length, and from its structure and habits we recognise that it belongs to the same family as the Pterodactyl. It is known as the flying dragon, and one kind of the species in its antics somewhat resembles the "praying mantis." It bows its head, and when sitting up has all the appearance of being engaged in prayer. The Mahomedans in Egypt are said to bear a great hatred to it. From the Pterodactyl as well as the Iguanodon we trace in all probability the marvellous tales of long ago. To us they sound impossible, but can we imagine what it must have been to live in times when creatures flew about, of more than 20 feet across from point to point of their wings,—creatures with scaly bodies and tails, part bird, part beast. Mythological stories of Dragons and the wonders performed by the Grecian Heroes seem almost possible and not, as we think them, purely creatures of the imagination.

The Ventriloquist and his Dog.

The art of ventriloquism, as a vocation, produces few millionaires. Hans Grausbeck frequently found it a difficult matter to get even a square meal, although he was a finished artist. Under stress of poverty he was obliged to part with his dog, to which he was much attached ; one day they entered a restaurant together, the decorous animal occupying the chair opposite his Master.

"I'll have a steak," quoth Hans.

"I'll have a steak, too," said the dog. The waiter's astonishment may be imagined, but his guests preserved a demeanour as if nothing had happened.

When the steak came Hans immediately complained, "This steak is frightfully tough."

"Mine's tough too", said the dog. "What a wonderful dog!" exclaimed the waiter. "Did you train him to talk ?"

"Oh yes", replied the genial Hans ; "he's talked for a long time."

"It's the most wonderful thing I ever heard. I must tell my master about him; he'll want to hear him, and I think he'll want to buy him."

Whereupon Hans gave a gesture of disapproval; when the owner of the restaurant appeared, the dog treated him to a bit of conversation, and the restaurateur waxed enthusiastic.

"I'd give anything for that dog," he declared: "He'd be the greatest advertisement in the world. I'll give you five pounds for him."

"He's very dear to me," truthfully asserted Hans.

"I'll give you ten pounds for him." Hans shook his head.

"But I must have him. I'll give you twenty pounds for him."

Whereupon Hans appeared to be on the verge of tears.

"Times are very hard, master, and I need the money. It's like a man losing his wife, but I cannot afford to keep a dog worth so much money."

The money was counted out forthwith, and Haus put it in his pocket.

"He's very fond of me, Pretzel is, and you'll have to bring a rope and let me tie him to this table until I'm out of reach."

The dog was tied, and his attitude harmonised with the act of separation. Just as the knot was tied and Hans started to rise, there came this ultimatum from the dog—

"You have proved yourself a very ungrateful master, and I shall never speak again as long as I live."—*Selected.*

The Indian Tailor Bird.

The man who first invented sewing in all probability thought that he had discovered, or rather created, an art which was entirely new, and that to him alone was due the credit of perceiving the virtues of a fibre thrust through holes.

The capabilities of his invention he could not be expected to foresee, inasmuch as he would, in all probability, limit its powers to the decoration rather than the clothing of his own person. In process of time he might comprehend that, by means of the needle and thread, a number of small leaves or skins, might be made to serve the same purpose as a single large one, and as his instruments improved, so would his work. There are, it is true, certain nations who have been acquainted with the art of sewing from time immemorial, and never seem to have made the least progress in it. The native Australian, for example, displays wonderful ingenuity in making thread from the sinews of the kangaroo's tail, and needles from the emu's bones; but there his invention seems to have stopped, and up to the present time, the junction of a couple of kangaroo skins, or the sewing together of a few "opossum" furs, seems to be the limit of his powers. Still, in other countries, the needle and thread have, as a rule, exhibited a regular improvement, until they have culminated in the sewing machine of the present day. Had, however, some good genius enabled the original founder of the art

to foresee its effects upon the world, he might well have been proud of his discovery, the earliest of human arts.

The respectable guild of tailors, indeed, were wont to attribute to their mystery an antiquity surpassing that of any other handicraft, and on the strength of a certain passage in Genesis, claimed Adam as the first tailor. As to the smiths and musicians, the tailors looked down upon them as of comparatively recent origin, and considered even the mysterious order of Freemasons as modern upstarts. Had they been moderately skilled in ornithology, they might have claimed a still older origin, on the grounds that, long before man came on the earth, the needle and the thread were used for sewing two objects together.

There is a wonderful little bird, popularly known by the appropriate title of Tailor Bird, its scientific name being *Orthotomus longicauda.* The manner in which it constructs its pensile nest is very singular.

Choosing a convenient leaf, generally one which hangs from the end of a slender twig, it pierces a row of holes along each edge, using its beak in the same manner that a shoemaker uses his awl, the two instruments being very similar to each other in shape, though not in material. The holes are not at all regular, and in some cases there are so many of them that the bird seems to have found some special gratification in making them, just as a boy who has a new knife makes havoc on every piece of wood which he can obtain.

When the holes are completed, the bird next procures its thread, which is a long fibre of some plant, generally much longer than is needed for the task which it performs. Having found its thread, the feathered tailor begins to pass it through the holes, drawing the sides of the leaf towards each other, so as to form a kind of hollow cone, the point downwards. Generally a single leaf is used for this purpose, but whenever the bird cannot find one that is sufficiently large, it sews two together, or even fetches another leaf and fastens it with the fibre. Within the hollow thus formed the bird next deposits a quantity of

soft white down, like short cotton wool, and thus constructs a warm, light and elegant nest, which is scarcely visible among the leafage of the tree, and which is safe from almost every foe except man.

There are several nests of the Tailor Bird in the British Museum, one composed of several leaves, and the other in which one leaf is used. It is a pity that in all instances the leaf has been plucked from the twig on which it grew; and it is to be wished that when other specimens are brought to England the twig will be cut off, and that if the leaf should fall off it may be replaced on the spot whereon it grew. Beautiful as is the detached nest, it does not give nearly so vivid an idea of its object as if it were still suspended to its branch.

The Tailor Bird is a native of India, and is tolerably familiar, haunting the habitations of man, and being often seen in the gardens and compounds, feeding away in conscious security. It seems to care little about lofty situations, and mostly prefers the ground, or lower branches of the tree, and flies to and fro with a peculiar undulating flight. Many species of the same genus are known to ornithologists.

The Tailor Bird is not the only member of the feathered tribe which sews leaves together in order to form a locality for its nest. Another pretty bird, the Fan tailed Warbler, has a similar method of action, though the nest cannot be ranked among the pensiles.

The bird builds among reeds, sewing together a number of their flat blades in order to make a hollow wherein its nest may be hidden; but the method which it employs is not precisely the same as that which is used by the Tailor Bird. Instead of passing its thread continuously through the holes, and thus sewing the leaves together, it uses a great number of threads, and makes a knot at the end of each, in order to prevent it from being pulled though the hole. A description and beautiful figure of this bird may be seen in Gould's "Birds of Europe," Vol. II.—*Selected.*

NOTICE.

"The Hospital Assistant."

We have received the March number of "The Hospital Assistant," a Medical journal published at Kolhapur (India). The journal is "devoted to the special purpose of helping the Hospital Assistants in their professional work, of voicing their grievances, and of serving as a medium of communicating their thoughts to each other." The class of Medical subordinates known as Hospital Assistants are members of the medical profession, passing rich on twenty pounds a year. They have grievances in plenty, but hitherto they have been practically inarticulate, and their real condition was not known to the public at large. Now that the journal under review has come forward to voice the grievances of the Hospital Assistants we shall, in all probability, hear more about them. The Hospital Assistants are a class of public servants who are doing useful work is a very unobtrusive manner. They deserve well of the public, and we hope that their new champion will be able to gain for them the justice which is their due. We hope that the Hospital Assistants will not remain content with "communicating their thoughts to each other." There are other medical men in the world besides Hospital Assistants, and occasionally they may have something interesting and instructive to communicate to the medical profession, and it will be to the interest of the Hospital Assistants to understand and assimilate those new medical doctrines. We hope that our young contemporary will survive the usual infantile journalistic complaints such as weak circulation, &c., and have a successful and useful career.

The Essay Competition.

The Essay competition is only intended for students, and preference in awarding prizes is given to those under 16 years of age. This is in reply to a correspondent.

The prize in the Essay competition on a 'Journey and what I saw on it,' has been won by Tambat Regunatha Rao, Mangalore, (S. Canara) Register No. 691. No. 401 is very highly commended for thoughtful, careful work, and we hope he will write regularly each month.

It is impossible to point out the defects in any one particular essay as there are generally so many competitors: but as far as we can, we notice a few of the general defects as we have done this month. Some errors in grammar in the composition are mentioned, as their correction will help our young readers. To drive '*through*" a tonga is wrong. We drive *in* a carriage. "We came to know that the train was late"—say, we found, or were informed that, etc.

We are glad to receive short contributions of interest, such as descriptions of places, buildings, customs, etc., which are peculiar to any one country. These articles would be corrected, and inserted in the magazine whenever suitable. When not accepted they will be returned if a stamped addressed envelope accompanies the MSS. No. 980 might send us a short article on Post Offices. There are many adventures which might be related about Tappal-runners, etc.

Two articles have been sent to us for insertion in the Magazine; but they are not quite suitable. It is well to remember that a certain amount of training is necessary in writing as well as in, say, carpentering, and our young friends should not be discouraged by the first refusal. We should welcome a good article on any technical subject, such as the very interesting paper which was sent to us on Gardening and inserted in a former number.

The subject for the next month's essay is "Union is Strength." Only one set of answers to the quotations has reached us up to date: we shall not therefore print the key until our next issue.

1. What Emperor was saved from being poisoned by means of a spider?

2. What king was saved from despair by a spider? What famous prisoner tamed a spider?

3. Tell me the peculiar names of some spiders, and why they are so called.

4. What do you consider the most wonderful animal story you have read?

5. Who is your favourite hero in English History? State why.

6. Name your favourite hero in fiction, and mention the books written by the author in whose work he is found.